

Psychology 330: Thinking

Fall 2012 CRN:17781

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Instructor: Theodore Bell

Office Hours: Mon (immediately after class until 12, Wed 12:00 (Straub 198 by appointment)

Teaching Assistant: Jason Hubbard

Meeting times: 10 AM-11:20 AM Location: 129 MCK

Text: Thought and Knowledge (4th edition)--D.F. Halpern.

Description and course goals: In this course, we will develop an understanding of human thought processes as they apply to judgment and decision-making, problem-solving, belief formation and evaluation, reasoning, and creativity. A reasonable sub-title for this course could be: "How to get fooled less often". We will put special emphasis on understanding the limitations of human cognition, memory, biases, heuristics, habits of thought, and situational/environmental factors which influence critical thinking. Through an examination of scientific research on the topic, and critical ideas from philosophy and education we will discuss ways to develop attitudes and provide tools for supporting effective reasoning and critical thinking in a variety of domains. There will be a strong emphasis on demonstrations, exercises, and assignments that engage with the course material both during lecture and outside of class.

Grading and Exams

Midterm 1	20%
Midterm 2	20%
Final Exam (a makeup exam)	
Quizzes: 7 weekly quizzes	30%
Homework	15%
Course Project:	15%

Ground rules for discussions: We will be discussing a wide range of topics and ideas, some of which may be frustrating, controversial, or politically charged. It is extremely important to me that we maintain a respectful environment while promoting a diversity of opinions and ideas. Participants should feel free to offer up their ideas, and should expect that those ideas be the focus of any critical analysis rather than the person discussing them. In other words, ideas are fair game for criticism, but personalizing attacks will not be tolerated.

Calendar

Week 1: Sept 24, 26 :

Introduction

Reasoning and Argument

Week 2: Oct 1, 3

Readings

Chapter 1, 4

Chapters 5, 6

Reasoning and Argument	
Science and Hypothesis testing	
Week 3: Oct 8, 10	Chapter 2, 3
Memory, Attention	
Week 4: Oct 15, 17 Exam week	Chapter 8
<u>Exam 1: Monday October 15th</u>	
Problem Solving	
Week 5: Oct. 22, 24	
Decision Making	Chapter 7
Failures in Thinking: Biases, Heuristics, Fallacies	
Week 6: Oct. 29, 31	
Failures in Thinking: Continued	
Week 7: Nov. 5, 7	TBA
Expert Thinking	
Week 8: Nov 12, 14	
Creativity	Chapter 10, TBA
<u>Exam 2: Wednesday November 14</u>	
Week 9: Nov. 19, 21	TBA
Emotions and Thought	
Moral Reasoning	
Week 10: Nov. 26, 28	TBA
Willpower, Habits of thought,	
Final Project Presentation	
Finals Week: Dec 7 (Make-up exam)	

Homework: These will consist of short essays and reactions, and graded on a 3 point scale. Details to come. No homework assigned first week.

Quizzes: we will assign online quizzes most weeks taken on Blackboard. Questions will come mainly from the test.

Course Project: The course project will be an educational poster exploring one of the topics of this course, plus a summary paper explaining your topic in more detail.

Exams: I have scheduled two exams (required), plus a final exam (not required). The exams are scheduled to be mainly essay. The final exam will cover all the material in the course, but will be an opportunity to recover some, but not all of the points lost during previous exams.